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Date of document : 16 Feb. 44
Title of document : Letter-Bern Archambault

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Excerpt of pertinent information :

Letter dated 16 Feb.

Joseph DARNAND who already since the first of the year wielded a great power in France as supreme head of "all forces for the maintenance of order" has now been given virtually unlimited authority as chief of a newly-created "Economic police"; thus the Germans have completed their plans without appearing to modify the outward form of the Vichy Government.

While retaining Marshal Petain as nominal chief of state and Pierre Laval as nominal chief of Government, they have now placed a man of their choice in the only two key positions still existing. Under their direction, DARNAND a soldier of fortune, controls not only the personal liberty of all citizens but their food also.

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It remains to be seen whether DARNAND can succeed where all others have failed, namely in abolishing the black market.

DARNAND on his part promises to be ruthless even towards his own forces. He has been inspecting police forces in various parts of the country. In Nancy he said for instance "I shall always march in front of the police I command. See to it that there will be no need for me to turn round in order to whip up those who may hesitate."

The hint seems to have been taken in Savoy where, after a period of hesitation, the struggle between police and patriots is coming to a head. In that region DARNAND proclaims that repression is entirely in French hands but the Germans also have their troops looking on.....

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Simultaneously mass arrests continue in the towns, all of which incidents are calculated to increase tension. If, as announced, DARNAND's summary courts are preparing for action with attendant executions, none can tell how it will end.

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